

Senate Resolution No. 13
Introduced by Senator Correa

Relative to Autism Awareness Month

WHEREAS, Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) now impact one out of every 50 children in the United States, with an incidence rate that is four times greater in boys, and are the fastest growing serious developmental disability, making these disorders more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) combined; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of autism is increasing by 10 to 17 percent annually and ASDs cost the nation over \$35 billion per year, and is estimated to exceed \$200 billion in 10 years; and

WHEREAS, Most school districts in California have seen a doubling of students with ASDs in the past five years. The number of Californians with ASDs who are served by the State Department of Developmental Services now exceeds 60,000, which is a number that has increased fivefold since 1998, and is more than 12 times what it was in 1987; and

WHEREAS, Many Californians are not adequately informed about ASDs and the value and importance of early identification, assessment, and treatment of these disorders; and

WHEREAS, Current scientific research demonstrates that the early identification of and intervention with children with ASDs can result in significant positive outcomes in many children with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, Parents and family members have made invaluable contributions through their commitment, care, and advocacy, to important advances in research, education, and treatment for individuals with ASDs; and

WHEREAS, Public information and awareness efforts are of paramount importance in accelerating early identification efforts and the proliferation of early intervention programs and services; and

WHEREAS, The Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders has appointed regional autism taskforces that are comprised of consumers and their family members, advocates, providers, researchers, and other experts in the area of ASDs, and other

stakeholders, to provide assistance to, and to support the work of, the select committee. Senator Steinberg, as Chair of the Senate Select Committee on Autism and Related Disorders, has established the Statewide Taskforce on Equity and Diversity to ensure that all Californians have equitable and fair access to state-funded services and that these services are provided in a linguistically and culturally competent manner; and

WHEREAS, California has been the established leader in providing services and support for the early identification, assessment, intervention, education, and treatment of individuals with ASDs that began with the passage of landmark state legislation, such as the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act in 1977 and Assembly Bill 3854 (Chapter 1527 of the Statutes of 1974), relating to autism and public education; and

WHEREAS, In 2011, Governor Brown signed into law Senate Bill 946 (Chapter 650 of the Statutes of 2011), California's landmark bill, authored by Senator Steinberg, which required health care coverage for behavioral health treatment for children with autism and pervasive developmental disorders; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 946 is estimated to provide coverage for around 125,000 Californians with ASDs, with savings to California taxpayers estimated to range from \$138.8 million to \$197.8 million annually; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate recognizes and commends the work of all nonprofit organizations that are contributing to the well-being of individuals with autism and their families; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate supports the goal of increasing research to learn the root causes of autism and identify the best methods of early intervention and treatment, expand programs for individuals with autism across their lifespan, and promote understanding of the special needs of people with autism; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate stresses the need to identify children with ASDs and to begin early intervention services immediately after a child has been diagnosed with autism, and that these services, interventions, and supports for individuals with ASDs and their families be provided in an integrated, seamless, comprehensive, and competent manner and delivered across the child's lifespan; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of individuals with ASDs for their sacrifice and dedication in

providing for the special needs of individuals with ASDs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate is committed to providing early screening, diagnosis, assessment, and treatment for ASDs in a manner that is equitable for all Californians, including, but not limited to, individuals and families who reside in underserved communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate designates April 2013 as California Autism Awareness Month, affirms its commitment to the important issues related to ASDs, and emphasizes that each and every individual with an ASD is a valued and important member of our society; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

Senate Resolution No. 13 read and adopted by the Senate April 18, 2013.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate